

Frequently Asked Questions About Jury Duty During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Are jury trials still needed?

Yes, they are. Jury trials are a cornerstone of the justice system. They are critical to fair hearings and a key constitutional guarantee (Amendment VI, U.S. Constitution) for all.

What if I am in the high-risk category or I am an essential worker-- can I be excused or rescheduled for jury duty?

Yes, you may. Jurors should logon to the jury webpage (juror.alalcourt.gov) to respond to your summons. Request for excusal/postponements must be in writing and received within five (5) business days of receipt of your summons. All correspondence must contain the juror's full name, date scheduled to appear for jury duty and reason for request. Request for excuses or postponements may be mailed (Patricia Campbell, Court Administrator, 2311 Gateway Drive, Suite 201, Opelika AL 36801), faxed (334.737.3435) or emailed (trish.campbell@alalcourt.gov). The Court Administrator's office will respond to your request via email.

Will the courthouse be clean and safe?

- **Sanitation:** The Justice Center is cleaned thoroughly every day, with high-touch areas cleaned more frequently. Protecting the health and safety of the public and court staff is essential.
- **Elevators and Stairwells:** Each elevator at the Courthouse is limited to one passengers at a time. Public restrooms are limited to two occupants. Stairs have been designated with "up" or "down" direction markers.
- **Breaks During Trials:** Jurors will be instructed to use restrooms specifically designated for jurors. Jurors will have assigned seats in the jury break areas. Jury break rooms and restrooms will be sanitized after the conclusion of the jury breaks.
- **Courtroom Seating:** Every room in the Justice Center has been measured and all seating will comply with the six-foot social distancing mandate.
- **Hand Sanitizer:** Hand sanitizer stations are located throughout the Justice Center. Additionally, each jury deliberation room is equipped with a PPE supply box containing disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, disinfecting spray, masks, and latex gloves.
- **Facial Coverings:** Every person entering the Justice Center is required to wear a face mask or shield while inside the Justice Center. Face masks will be distributed to

anyone entering the Justice Center without a mask. Building entrants may wear their own masks. However, citizens will not be allowed to wear any face covering containing inflammatory statements, as determined by the judge. The juror will be required to remove the facial covering and wear a court issued face mask.

Are citizens screened before they enter the Justice Center?

Each person entering the Justice Center will have their temperature taken with a touchless device. Person with a temperature or 100 or greater will be denied entry.

Will the courtroom and jury rooms adhere to the CDC precautionary measures of social distancing?

Yes, the court will adhere to the CDC precautionary measures. Jurors will have assigned seats and will return to their assigned seat after breaks. The judge, court security, and bailiff will enforce these precautions. Breaks will be staggered to reduce traffic flow in hallways, stairs, and elevators. Entire courtrooms will be reserved for use by jurors, to facilitate social distancing during juror breaks and deliberations.

Will I have to bring a mask and gloves?

If you want to bring and wear your own personal protective equipment you may do so. However, the court has masks and latex gloves available for jury use.

Will the courthouse have hand sanitizer dispensers and hand washing areas available?

Yes, hand sanitizer stations have been placed around the Justice Center. Rest rooms are equipped with antibacterial soaps so citizens may wash and sanitize their hands.

What if I feel unwell or sick after reporting to jury duty?

Contact and court staff member immediately or, if assigned to a jury pool, your assigned court bailiff.

What if I feel sick the day I am to report for jury duty? Do I stay home?

If you feel sick, do not report for jury duty. Call Court Administration at 334.737.3432.

Will Coffee and reading materials be available?

Due to CDC precautionary reasons, the court will not be offering coffee or reading materials. Please feel free to bring you own. You will need to take them with you when you leave. The court will provide bottled water or you may bring your own.

What other steps has the court taken to ensure the safety of jurors?

- We have drastically reduced the number of jurors that report at the same time for jury duty. The Grand Assembly Room normally seats 120 jurors. With current

social distancing rules, the Grand Assembly Room will only seat a maximum of 40 jurors.

- Court security will monitor the lines of jurors entering the Justice Center to ensure jurors are social distancing.
- Jury deliberations will not be held in the jury room. They will be held in larger conference rooms.
- Jurors will not be asked to touch any surfaces, documents, or objects that have been previously touched by another person without using gloves or being sanitized.
- Jurors will be able to wash or sanitize their hands as often as they feel necessary.
- No one who has tested positive for coronavirus or exhibits any symptoms will be permitted to enter the Justice Center.